



County of Los Angeles

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March 19, 2003

To: Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Chair
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From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Firefighting Grants

Washington Advocate Franklin Logan reports that on March 14, 2003, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, which is funded at \$750 million in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2003, a \$500 million increase over FFY 2002. The NOFA indicates that, after a set-aside for fire and injury prevention programs and Federal administrative costs are deducted, DHS expects to award a total of \$680 million to state and local fire departments through a competitive grant application process. By statute, an applicant may receive no more than \$750,000 in any given year. The deadline for submitting a grant application is April 11, 2003. My staff informed the County's Fire Department of the NOFA.

Under the NOFA, fire departments may request funds for a wide variety of uses, including: firefighting operations and safety (e.g., training, equipment, and modifications to fire stations and facilities); fire prevention (e.g., public education, code enforcement, arson prevention); emergency medical services (e.g., training and equipment); and firefighting vehicle acquisition (e.g., pumpers, tankers, ambulances, fireboats, aerials, and foam units). Eligible equipment purchases include thermal imaging cameras, integrated communications systems, interoperable communications equipment, and personal protective equipment.

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Influenza Vaccine Initiative

In testimony today before the Senate Appropriations Committee, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson indicated that the President's proposed FFY 2004 budget included \$100 million to ensure the nation has an adequate supply of influenza vaccine in the event of a pandemic. Funds would be used to ensure a year-round influenza vaccine production capacity and the development and implementation of rapidly expandable production technologies.

Pursuit of County Positions on Legislation

S. 652 (Chafee, R-RI), Access to Hospitals Act of 2003: This bill, which was introduced on March 18, 2003, would freeze Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) allotments to states at the FFY 2002 level. Under current law, DSH allotments to states were cut, effective in FFY 2003, resulting in a loss of about \$184 million to California. Senator Feinstein was one of the bill's 14 original co-sponsors. Based on the policy supporting increased DSH payments that is included in the Federal Agenda adopted by your Board on February 4, 2003, the County's Washington advocates are supporting S. 652.

We will continue to keep you advised of any new developments.

DEJ:GK
MAL:MT:ib

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
All Department Heads
Legislative Strategist